

self-assertive character; now Zola was all that, and from the outset, therefore, difficulties beset him. His views on matters of religion were not at first the great obstacle which they subsequently became. There had always been a Voltairean element in the Academy; and Littré and Eenan had eventually secured election in spite of all the bitter hostility of Monseigneur Dupanloup, the "Eagle of Orleans." True it is that Dupanloup had failed to keep them out by the very violence of his opposition, and since 1882 the Church had been represented in the Academy by a prelate of a different character, an unctuous man, Cardinal Perraud, who did not bluster like Dupanloup but exerted his influence in a stealthy way, after the fashion usually ascribed to the Jesuits. To him and his gradually acquired ascendancy, Zola's final defeat in the struggle for Academical honours was largely due. In that respect "Lourdes" and "Home" sealed his fate, as he himself freely acknowledged to his friends. But when he first came forward as a candidate he had written nothing irretrievable from the Catholic standpoint. Though he had "The Conquest of Plassans" and "Abbé Mouret's Transgression" behind him, the former dealt only with the political and worldly in-

trigues of a priest, and the latter, if it questioned the vow of perpetual chastity, at least ended with the repentance and submission of the offender. Besides, "The Dream," with all its mysticism and religiosity, was of a nature to propitiate rather than offend the clericals.

On the other hand, however, Zola's political and social views gave great offence to conservatives generally, and in the eighties the Dukes de Broglie and d'Audiffret-Pasquier were very powerful in the Academy. They and those who